



Transportation Advisory Committee.

Date: February 7, 2024.

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: John Alessi (DPCD), John Aslanian, Beth Benedikt, Bill Copithorne (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Ofer Mazor, Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Kenny Fennell, Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Vincent Baudoin, Grace Carpenter, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Jacob Deck, Jordan Glazier, Audrey Robert Ramirez, Gail Steketee, Petru Sofio and Joe Solomon.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

B. Approval of January 10, 2024 Meeting Notes.

Minutes for the Meeting of January 10, 2024, were approved.

C. Correspondence Sent/Received from January 6, 2024, to February 2, 2024.

1. January 23, 2024, memo from Select Board and email from Jim Feeney to TAC, "**Concerns Re: Removal of Speed Limit 30 Signs on Broadway...**" and "**TAC Referral - Special Speed Regulations**". Discussed under Section 7.

2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).

Jacob Deck, Town Meeting Member Pct 13, requested an update on the Stratton Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project. See DPCD updates below.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).

A. Update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (John Alessi, DPCD).

Bike Lane Design Guide: The guide was presented to the Select Board on February 5. The Select Board endorsed it, and the guide will be shared publicly in the near future.

Medford St Bike Lanes and Warren St striping: These are scheduled for striping in the spring.

Mass Ave / Appleton St: MassWorks construction grant is due in June.

Stratton Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project: This is a project to add and upgrade sidewalks and crosswalks along Hemlock St and Dickson Ave to Stratton Elementary School. The right-of-way process is underway, and a Warrant Article will be before Town Meeting in April, 2024. Construction is set by MassDOT and the project will be advertised for construction in April, 2025.

B. Update from the Department of Public Works (Bill Copithorne, DPW).

Chestnut Street: RRFB is now functional after a faulty battery was replaced.

C. There was no update from the Police Department.

4. Park Ave Corridor.

A. Vote: Park Ave / Oakland Ave Crosswalk.

Jeff Maxtutis and Melissa Laube summarized the Working Group's improvements under consideration.

Immediate term: add an in-street yield-to-pedestrian bollard sign; add retroreflective crosswalk sign on the back of existing crosswalk signs to improve awareness; and trim tree branches that obstruct driver view. (This recommendation also applies to the crosswalk at Park Ave / Appleton St.)

Short term: install flex post curb extensions and assess their efficacy. Check speed limits for Park Ave, and ensure proper placement of speed-limit signs.

Long term: install sidewalks on Oakland Ave to connect the intersection, and consider curb extensions if flex-post trial is successful. Install speed-feedback radar sign.

Bill Copithorne, following up from the January Meeting's discussion, said that the DPW Highway Department does want documentation on placement of in-road bollards. Len Diggins asked for a process to expedite certain requests, such as the placement of a bollard, so that it is not delayed for an entire month until the next TAC meeting.

TAC voted unanimously to send the Memo to the Town Manager and Select Board simultaneously.

5. Discussion: Parking Lot Tree Zoning

Elisabeth Carr-Jones is the Co-Chair of the Open Space Committee, and she presented on the Warrant Article for tree canopy on parking lots. This Warrant Article seeks to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing heat island effects through a zoning bylaw requiring coverage of parking lots by tree canopy or photovoltaics. Parameters of the proposed zoning changes— e.g., percent coverage and size of parking lots impacted—were based on a bylaw passed by the Town of Lexington last year.

Bill Copithorne asked about the implementation of the bylaw. He noted that the Town-owned Russell Common Lot is in the process of being redesigned.

Scott Smith and Laura Swan commented on safety considerations for nighttime lighting under the tree canopy and photovoltaics. Jim Stubbe added that rain and snow management under photovoltaics also should be considered.

6. Discussion: Highland and High Haith.

Laura Swan said that the Working Group Memo will be presented next month to TAC for a vote. She summarized the recommendations:

1. Replace and relocate advance warning sign to a new retroreflective sign positioned in front of utility pole to enhance its visibility to drivers.
2. Replace crosswalk signs with retroreflective signs on the front and back with retroreflective pole marker.
3. Repaint advance yield shark teeth to provide an additional cue to drivers.
4. Install ADA detectable pads at handicap ramps.
5. Consider installing a speed feedback radar sign.

Laura Swan also noted that speed and volume data will be collected, which can inform future decisions. Jeff Maxtutis agreed with the recommendations noting that if additional changes need to-be implemented, TAC can consider curb extensions at the crosswalk.

7. Update: Gray St.

Speed and volume data will be collected on Gray St. The existing data is from 2015. In site visits, few pedestrians were observed crossing Gray St at Churchill Ave. The ones who were crossing were adults walking dogs.

8. Discussion: Speed limits on Broadway, Park Ave, and Town roadways.

John Alessi provided background. In 2017, a TAC Working Group recommended to the Select Board to adopt a 25-mph Town-wide speed limit, except for roadways that (1) have Special Speed Regulation (“SSR”) or (2) are state-owned. Nine locations have SSR of 30 mph; and five locations have SSR of more than 30 mph. Recently, the Broadway Neighbor Coalition asked the Select Board to remove the 30-mph speed limit sign on Broadway near Warren St, and neighbors near Park Ave asked the Select Board to lower the 35-mph speed limit on Park Ave.

These requests prompted a larger discussion on vulnerable road users in lieu of “An Act to Reduce Traffic Fatalities” passed by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2023 and Connect Arlington. The Town asked TAC to examine a Town-wide approach of rescinding the SSR that exceed 25 mph. The goals will be to (1) address safety concerns, (2) reduce driver confusion, and (3) consolidate research rather than consider multiple independent requests. If the Town decides to rescind the SSR, then the existing speed limit signs will need to-be removed (other than the Town-wide speed-limit signs at the Town borders). However, driver speeds may not be slowed as roadway design strongly impacts speed.

Vincent Baudoin of the Broadway Neighbor Coalition noted that speed limits were set in the 1970s in a different context from today’s needs. Greater discretion is being given to towns to set speed limits, and he supports rescinding the SSRs to a single Town-wide speed limit (other than school zones and safety zones). This will remove the incentive for a driver to go faster on Broadway which has a speed limit of 30 mph. In the future, the lower speed limit will permit design changes to slow drivers.

Scott Smith expressed general support for rescinding SSRs and simplifying where possible (e.g., Park Ave, Pleasant St). He wondered about drivers’ speed behavior on certain roads that would experience abrupt changes in speed limits, such as Route 3 by Winchester and Summer St by Lexington, and urged for

speed and volume data. On roadways such as Park Ave and Broadway, if rescinding SSRs brings drivers into non-compliance, then the Town will need to address it with design changes to slow drivers.

John Alessi responded that the Town is looking to acquire speed and volume data across the Town more widely. However, it will not happen in time to inform this project.

John Aslanian suggested that TAC move quickly to address the safety concern on Broadway and not wait to review all the SSRs. A speed feedback trailer can be placed to educate and slow drivers on Broadway.

Jeff Maxtutis inquired about the Town's discussions with MassDOT and the enforceability of speed limits as speed limit signs within the Town will need to be removed. Bill Copithorne responded that speed enforcement can occur based on the Town-wide speed-limit signs placed at the Town's borders. However, APD might not be staffed at a level to pullover speeding drivers. He agreed that roadway design speed is important in driver behavior, and it cannot quickly be addressed across the Town quickly.

Len Diggins said that in considering this request to rescind SSRs, TAC needs to make the case for why the Town should keep the existing situation.

Jim Stubbe will lead a Working Group of Len Diggins, Ofer Mazor, and Scott Smith. John Alessi will communicate with MassDOT for the Working Group.

9. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.